

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are all the claims pending in the application.

The Examiner rejects:

- claims 1, 2, 7-12 and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Steinberg et al. (Steinberg);
- claims 1-6 and 11-16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by JP-09-046577 to Ogawa et al. (Ogawa);
- claims 3, 4, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Steinberg; and
- claims 5, 6, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Steinberg in view of Ogawa.

The Examiner also objects to the drawings due to labeling informalities in Figs 2(a) - 2(c), and requires that Fig. 10 be labeled as "Prior Art".

With regard to the drawings, Applicant submits herewith Request for Approval of Proposed Drawing Corrections (Figures 2(a)-2(c) and 10) which is believed to address the Examiner's objections. Applicant notes that Fig. 10 is being labeled as "Related Art", and its applicability as "prior art" is being investigated. The Examiner is respectfully requested to approve these corrections.

With regard to the prior art rejections, the prior art references do not disclose, teach or suggest at least the feature of a write inhibit flag, let alone implementation of such a feature in combination with other novel features recited in Applicant's independent claims 1, 2, 11 and 12. Therefore, Applicant's independent claims 1, 2, 11 and 12, as well as the dependent claims 3-10 and 13-24 (which incorporate all the novel and unobvious features of their respective base claims) are patentable over the prior art for at least these reasons.

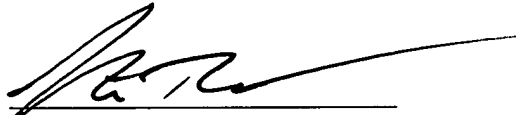
Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln No. 09/414,507

Atty Dkt No. Q56144

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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